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Hoover Said to Slur Liuzzo

DETROIT—The Detroit News says recently released FBI records show that J. Edgar Hoover feared the murder of civil rights worker Viola Liuzzo in 1965 would rally the civil rights movement and did everything in his power to slur her reputation.

The News said 1,500 pages of reports on the federal investigation of Liuzzo's killing in Selma, Ala., were released by the FBI at the request of the Liuzzo family as part of a $2 million civil claim the family filed a year ago. The family asserts the FBI failed to prevent the 39-year-old woman's death.

The records show the FBI tried to discredit the Detroit woman's integrity by falsely claiming she was a drug user, had mental problems, and was "necking" with a "Negro man" at the time of her death, the News said.

According to the newspaper, the records also show that Hoover, then FBI director, also attempted to talk then-President Lyndon B. Johnson out of becoming publicly involved in the case. The president ignored that advice.